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THE CALL TO THE UNITARIAN MINISTRY.

BY REV. A. D. MAYO.

THE New-York Convention of last April was the first great occasion when the attention of the Unitarian public was concentrated upon the condition and prospects of the body of Unitarian churches. It was a gathering of the representatives of the Unitarian people, the clergy hardly appearing as a separate class during its proceedings. In those few days, many of us learned for the first time how large a part of the agitations and bitter controversies that have rent our spiritual domain within the last ten years has been exclusively the work of ministers, in which even our cultivated laity have felt little interest, and which have been both incomprehensible and disgusting to the mass of hearers in our churches. To the profound astonishment of "ultraists" of both "wings," and the entire class of dreamers and pundits, who came up to the metropolis big with some elaborate scheme of order or anarchy, the solid, religious sense of the body resolved at once to save Christian liberty and order alike, and to organize for an aggressive movement that should enlist the whole power of the denomination; and, notwithstanding

ing the adverse criticism that can yet be heard where little knots of impracticable clergymen and their echoes are gathered, the Unitarian body has been wonderfully enlivened by the doings of that week. More than two hundred thousand dollars have flowed into our denominational treasury. Our languishing Antioch has been saved, — we hope with its final salvation; and from all directions is heard the call to a missionary work which shall plant our form of Christianity at every centre of spiritual strategy in the Union.

But we are suddenly checked in this movement of exultant hope, by the almost total lack of suitable men to carry out these magnificent plans. With ample means in hand to plant a church this year in a score or a hundred new centres of influence; with the people of numerous important cities, East and West, calling for a church of our faith, — the Unitarian Association and the Western Conference find themselves brought almost to a dead halt by the want of men to do the proposed work. Twelve young men only have entered upon the Unitarian ministry from our two schools of theology, during the present summer, — a number too small to fill the places of the deceased and the disabled of the past year. Harvard College does not furnish a single graduate to our ministry this year. Last year no theological student entered the Cambridge school; and we doubt if both our schools will secure twenty new students for the coming term. Many of our old, established pulpits are either vacant, or filled with inferior men, in lack of suitable occupants. Every new society formed in the West robs a large Eastern congregation of its pastor, if it obtains an effective leader, thus engendering bitterness between the two sections of the country; or the new movement is forced to begin under the lead of a discarded adventurer or an inexperienced

youth, and swiftly goes to wreck. It is painful to see how some of our churches are waiting for a pastor until a minister can be converted from an evangelical sect; indeed, these conversions are, in some quarters, coming to be regarded as nearly our most efficient source of supply. The plain fact, which at the next meeting of the National Conference is to be looked squarely in the face, is, that we have not enough serviceable ministers to keep our present number of churches in first-rate working condition; and, after having laid out our vast campaign of liberal propaganda, we have no army to send forth.

It will not do to question this fact, on the ground that we have a large reserve of unemployed clergymen who are always ready to come to the rescue. Every church, every profession, has the same "invalid corps," — men who have failed to sustain themselves, often in spite of personal worth, culture, and zeal. It may be very unaccountable why such men do not succeed: but they do not; and this must be an accepted fact. We have fewer subordinate ecclesiastical positions in which this class of workers can be effectively used than other religious organizations; indeed, the position of any clergyman who cannot be a successful Christian minister is very hard in our brotherhood. In view of the missionary work before us, we must leave out of the account this entire section of our clergy. The man, who, after a fair trial before our societies, has fallen out of a place and remains out, is not a man we can use. He may be too high or too low, too learned or too ignorant, too refined or vulgar, too radical or conservative, — it may be almost impossible to say why he is left out, — but the verdict of the people is final; and we only stultify ourselves, and break down the cause, by persisting to force him upon any new and important post. The mass of hearers in any Christian sect learn finally

to discriminate between serviceable ministers and incompetents ; and we never have known such a decision to be reversed.

So we are compelled to ask the reasons of this dearth of clergymen in the Unitarian body, and seek the cure of a disease which, unless arrested, will destroy the denomination.

We are often told the reason lies in the insufficient support of the clergy. We heartily indorse every reasonable word that can be spoken in favor of increasing the salaries of clergymen. They are shamefully inadequate in every Christian sect, and the Church does languish in consequence. But our denomination pays better salaries than any church in America. No body of clergy is, on the whole, so generously sustained, in this country, as the three hundred Unitarian ministers. Why should this cause keep young men out of our ministry, while thousands of able men flock to the Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, and other communions, for notoriously poor remuneration? Neither is our profession especially noted for low salaries. How few young lawyers and physicians in our cities live upon their professional income, yet one stumbles over a new lawyer or doctor at every stop on the pavement. We do not suppose a large number of young men have gone into the army, or now seek positions in public offices, to make money.

Neither, as is sometimes alleged, does the prejudice against the Unitarian clergy in the country deter young men from our ministry. In Boston and its environs, where Unitarianism is the leading religion, the supply is not equal to the demand. The only Unitarian College in the Union gives us this year three Orthodox and no Liberal theological students. Beside, this old cry of prejudice against our clergy is not true. The Catholic and Evangeli-

cal *clergy* avoid our prominent ministers and laymen; but we venture to assert that no religious body so small as ours ever had so large a number of men and women in positions of honor and trust conferred by the people. Professor Park may declare that Unitarians are not "respectable;" but the State of Massachusetts declares them sufficiently so to become governors, United-States senators, judges: and the people of the United States, during the late war, entrusted the Republic to a President and Cabinet in which the most influential members were believers in our faith. To be an able and worthy Unitarian clergyman is now a high distinction in any portion of the free States of this Union.

We are told that the controversies and contentions, and exhibitions of partisan bigotry, in our order, deter young men from our ministry. But our quarrels are only zephyrs compared to the tempests that sweep through the other sects. During the last twenty-five years, every great Church in America, save the Catholic, has been rent again and again by theological, ecclesiastical, and social questions. The clerical wire-pulling, the bitter rivalry, the clashing personalities, in any of these bodies, are almost incomprehensible to our young candidates for the ministry. Beside, this is no real discouragement elsewhere. Do men succeed in business, in politics, anywhere, because everybody helps them, or in spite of all kinds of opposition? Any man who can be snubbed into permanent failure by the machinations at 245 Washington Street, or any other dragon's cave in our Mount Zion, must be made of too sensitive and delicate stuff to face the storms of American life.

We are told that the Unitarian standard of service is so high that young men shrink from it. But a high demand everywhere else insures a supply. The imperilled Union

called for generals to lead its armies, and in two years the country swarmed with efficient military men. Human nature is stimulated by a summons to lofty performances. Difficulties and privations do not keep young men out of any path in which they are strongly impelled to go. The mines of California, the banks of "the Georges," the dingy schoolhouses of the freedmen, the wild lands of the West, all hard, dangerous, contested posts of service in America, are thronged by youths of both sexes. The anxious mother who moans with you over the discouragements and tribulations of the ministry has one son boring for oil in Crawford County, living like a savage, in hourly danger of bankruptcy; while her accomplished daughter, who shrinks from the perils of the parsonage, takes her life in her hand to teach a hundred black children amid the malarias of South Carolina. Indeed, the majority of people make no account of dangers and toils when choosing a profession. They go where inspiration, hope, duty, or interest call loudest, and trample all obstacles under their feet as long as the impulse lasts.

We must look below all these superficial reasons to account for this dearth of clergymen in our spiritual Zion. We must declare, whatever emotions may accompany the confession, that our Unitarian body has no competent supply of leaders, chiefly *because there has lately been and still is no great, inspiring motive constantly bearing upon our young men to enter our ministry.* Somehow the mainspring of motion in the denomination has been weakened. The old enthusiasm that sent great and good men into our pulpits has cooled. There is not in the Unitarian clergy, as a body, that zeal, unity, faith, and triumphant courage, which, like a great, holy fire, attracts, excites, forces, or persuades the noblest young men to flock to it, and claim its brotherhood. With such advantages of culture, wealth,

social position, civil elevation, as no other class of American ministers has enjoyed; with such a religion as never before challenged the highest enthusiasm of the best men, — the Unitarian clergy have let the great opportunity slip out of their hands; till now, when the people have risen, and called upon them to do their own appropriate work, they are humiliated to discover that they are too feeble to do it, and few men of the right stamp desire to re-enforce their ranks. What is the fatal spell that now seems to bind us on the threshold of our promised land?

There are two forms of Christian faith that furnish that motive power which fills young men of the best ability and culture with a holy enthusiasm to sacrifice all things in consecrated toil for mankind. The general idea of life that forms the distinctive characteristic of the Catholic and Protestant Evangelical Christianity is one of these powers. According to that faith, man is a lost creature, to be saved by superhuman efforts of the church and priesthood, which represent to him the grace of God. Pity and compassion for a fallen soul; love for man, and hope of his salvation; gratitude to Christ, who has opened the way for the rescue of humanity by his own great sacrifice, — here is a motive strong enough to impel a faithful believer to do and dare all things in the service of the Master. The great mass of this clergy is fired with this faith. It may be a low, erroneous, half-barbarian view of God's universe; and doubtless, taken as it lies outspread in the creeds of these churches, it is a semi-pagan religion. But perhaps it is all the better adapted thereby to inflame the souls of the mass of mankind; and the majority of educated and able men in America are not above its tremendous fanaticism.

But men assimilate their favorite motives from any creed; and thousands of young men go into the ministry of

these denominations with a truly Christian devotion to the welfare of mankind, moved by a zeal that leaves far out of sight the absurdities and contradictions of their catechism. We know that there are complaints in this direction over the lack of interest in the ministry. But all these great bodies find able and devoted men to occupy their prominent posts, and carry out vast schemes of foreign and home missions. The almost entire opposition of the new science and polite literature of the day, added to the difficulties of the creed, does not hinder the steady influx of young men in this direction. The discouragements to a young theological student in any of these bodies are vastly greater than those which oppose our cultivated youth; but there is beneath all these a tidal flow of earnest, manly enthusiasm which gives regularity to the fluctuating ocean of the popular theology. It is easy to understand why the man who really believes this theology should glory in any toil and sacrifice which will make him one of God's agents in the salvation of souls from everlasting perdition.

And there is another form of Christian faith which inspires its believers with even a loftier and more intense spirit of consecration than that called Catholic or Orthodox. Its great, leading facts are the spirituality, paternity, indwelling presence, and guiding providence of God, who is infinite love; a humanity born out of this divinity, for ever inspired, disciplined, educated towards union with him; love to God and man the central law of the universe; life, the primary school of the Father, where all his children are trained to final reconciliation and obedience; this world the potential kingdom of heaven, where all things are to be adjusted to the Golden Rule; immortality, the spiritual life open to every soul; and Jesus the divine teacher, exemplar, leader, friend, created to guide the race to its salvation in love.

It may be this faith is harder to attain and preserve than the other. It may require a preparation of the soul for its belief, as the highest truth always comes after the preparation to receive it. Perhaps it is not reasonable to expect, that great masses of sensual, ignorant, sinful men can be at once lifted up to it. Jesus was not able at once to convert his countrymen, and the average Christianity of the world always has gone on centuries behind it. And we could not hope that a majority of able and earnest men of culture would be found within its range. But we do know, that when a soul has really apprehended its glory, and beholds in vision this Christian ideal of existence, it is fired with a joy, hope, zeal, consecration, beyond any other inspiration yet known among men. Such was the spirit that was in Jesus Christ, John, Paul. Such has been the spirit of the noblest and wisest leaders in the Church in all ages, whatever may have been the technical creed fabricated by their understanding. This zeal is nothing less than a holy exaltation of the spirit, which bears along every faculty, fuses all culture and experience, overrides technical and critical systems, and speeds on its way with irresistible power to the soul of man, and the central soul of society. The man who is in this state of faith and consecration is a true minister of that Liberal Christianity which is the best approach to the religion of Jesus.

The early ministry of the Unitarian and Universalist bodies in the United States was full of this exalted spirit of consecration. Channing, Ware, Buckminster, Greenwood, Peabody, and many another, only inferior in genius, but equal in zeal; Ballou, Streeter, Smith, Murray, and their associates, — were men who believed with all their heart in these glorious truths about God, man, Christ, life and immortality. Never were greater results wrought than by some of these men. They went on with a zeal

like the morning light, and opened broad avenues of liberal faith all through the land.

And it is only justice to say that they have not died childless. Our Unitarian domain has been extended and wondrously lighted up by men of radiant faith and holy lives, who have gone on fearing nothing and doubting nothing within the circle of these great fruitful beliefs. Nobody is surprised to find the books of Parker in every thoughtful man's library, or to hear multitudes of strong men impute their conversion to him; for he believed in God and man so completely, that his fragmentary denials were but the floating drift upon the deep, swift current of his mighty faith. That Eliot and Heywood should raise up two admirable Western churches in two most unpromising localities; that King should wrench a half-disloyal State into loyalty; that Furness and May should become identified with the history of freedom in the two great Middle States; that Bellows should become a household name in every soldier's home; that the benign face and paternal voice of our patriarchal Hosmer should compel even the wildest ass in the Western Conference to bray, for one little hour, in unison with the eternal harmonies; that others, perhaps not second in worth to any of these, should kindle, exalt, and mould entire communities into the likeness of our majestic faith, surprises nobody who knows its capabilities. The only cause of wonder is, that every man of our clergy is not such a centre of light; that, with such illustrious examples of what a Unitarian minister can be and do, every generous young man in our body does not rush to the ministry, and our schools overflow with prophets.

But such is not the case. We must confess that, so far, the Unitarian clergy, as a body, has not shared in this lofty inspiration of the few. As a class, it is not what we

should demand from the faith it represents. It does not present a luminous centre which attracts the finest minds and deepest souls to its brotherhood. Somehow—it may be in God's providence—a considerable portion of our clergy long ago diverged from the glowing path lighted by these illustrious names, and placed themselves in abnormal, eccentric, unsympathetic relations with the mass of their own hearers, and quite outside the reach of the community. The glowing love of truth that shone so brightly through the faith of Channing and Lowell, in these men paled into a sickly love of analysis. The higher faculties of the soul were disparaged in the interest of a fastidious intellectualism, a dainty taste, and a teasing criticism of the universe. The whole-hearted love for actual men and women and children, in their ordinary relations in this world, was supplanted by visionary theories of millennial society, a haughty preference for a cultivated clique, or a mystical and transcendental communion with the Great Spirit, more exclusive than any aristocracy of this world.

How this tendency grew upon our schools of theology, till from homes of prophets they became manufactories of critics; how our religious press drooped to the record of a weekly or monthly debating society; how the lofty, fervent preaching of the early day degenerated to the slovenly reading of essays, in which man was dissected, Jesus impaled on the point of a cambric-needle criticism, God resolved into the original elements of being, the Bible spirited away into literature, and all the force and fire eliminated from the ideal of a holy life,—all of us can remember, though perhaps none of us can describe.

This tendency seems to have afflicted in about equal degree all sections of our body. The moralists, the evangelicals, the transcendentalists among us have furnished in Mann and Gannett and Clarke, powerful leaders whom

the people cannot forget. Yet their followers seem to vie in the poor strife of getting off into the narrowest corner, setting up the puniest theories against God's realities, and vexing the churches with their wretched squabbles. Whole regions of our clerical and cultivated lay Unitarian world have thus been given over to a secondary life utterly demoralizing to our faith. In wandering through this dismal realm, one is constantly finding men and women who have gifts and graces and convictions of the extraordinary and ornamental kind, enough to adorn a whole denomination; but strangely destitute of those common sympathies, and homely hopes and fears, and human interests, which alone make the loftiest souls powerful among men.

Out of this tendency has come that fanatic and capricious independency which keeps so many of our great societies like lovely islands, far out at sea, with no landing place for ordinary navigators; the re-actionary mood that has carried several of our leading preachers clean out of sympathy with our Unitarian ideas; the effort to substitute a picturesque formalism for a decaying spirit of prayer; the freezing atmosphere of scientific analysis that pervades so many pulpits; the astounding conceit that in some of our young divines places God and his universe off at arm's length, to be scanned and classified through the eye-glass of a pet theory, often a pert boy's conceit; the eagerness of so many to disclaim our name, even to repudiate the Christian fellowship. Suffice to say that here has been a disease, or a phase in our development — call it as we will — that has robbed our preachers of their power, our pastors of their energy, and made our churches too often the dreariest places on God's earth. Again and again have we seemed about to sink under this fearful disintegration. More than one of us has asked, "How can a body live with

such indifferentism, dilettanteism, and morbid criticism, located in its high places, making a dread vacuity where should be a luminous centre of life?"

But thanks to the faith of the honest, believing laity in our churches; to the inspiration for practical benevolence and philanthropy that has illuminated many of our societies; to the great zeal and faith of a few really representative men; especially to the intrinsic greatness of our Unitarian Christianity, which, like the sea, can litter a thousand shores with its own rubbish, and still flow on in purity, — we have not perished. But we have now come to that pass, that unless our clergy can close up around the few great elemental ideas of our theology, and, by contact with the common wants and duties of men, learn to preach to the people, instead of lecturing to little cliques of scholastic or eccentric minds; unless our press can be lifted into a positive power in a forward movement to which all our controversies shall be subordinate; unless our schools can place a religious manhood in front, and order criticism to the rear; unless we can come into God's union, and work under his providence, instead of trying to build outside of him, — we shall not be longer spared.

The war has done us all, especially our clergy, a great good. It has recalled us for a season from our meandering through a land of pale shadows, to a dreadful and inspiring world of conflict at our own doors. More than one dry or visionary romancer of the pulpit has found his own soul, and learned to move the souls of common men. Out of this great awakening has come our first general convention of the body, — the National Conference, — a sincere missionary zeal, a full treasury. Let us not mistake the lesson of the hour. This is a new opportunity for us to lead the Christianity of the regenerated Union. If our clergy and influential laity can heartily unite, plant themselves on the

central and simple faiths of our Unitarian Christianity, and toil with their whole strength to apply and teach them, the Unitarian ministry will become the most attractive profession to the best young men of America. It will be counted the highest honor to be one of a brotherhood that can preserve all practical freedom of religious thought and action, while it is bound into one fiery mass by a love to God and man which consumes all its minor distinctions. We shall then find the men to do our hardest work; the best men, most eager to go where the hottest battle is raging.

We do not suppose all this can come at once. Our little world has rolled too far away from the central light and heat to be at once led back. But it is a work that every minister, every earnest Christian man and woman, can help on. It must begin in the deep places of our souls, be nourished with prayer and humility and daily sacrifice, till it regenerates us from our deadness and conceit, and brings us all to the foot of that old cross which still towers high above our proudest liberal Babel. Every renewed soul among us will be a new argument for the Unitarian ministry. Every vital church will send forth more than one prophet of the Lord. Every gathering of our people will generate a new warmth. God grant that the night of our aberrations is past, and the day is dawning when we can call for help in faith that the call will be answered, and the wide field before us be fought over and manfully won.

NOTE. — The subject of the above article is one of such pressing importance that the serious attention of all our readers is directed to the thoughts which it contains. We especially ask parents and superintendents and pastors to consider it well. Place it in the hands of serious young men. *Seek out* young men who may fill the places in God's vineyard that are waiting for them!

THE SOCIAL CHANGES AFFECTING THE ECCLESIASTICAL LIFE OF NEW-ENGLAND TOWNS.

BY HENRY W. BELLOWS, D.D.

(Concluded.)

LET nobody suppose, that the people of the town we have described, are any more irreligious or quarrelsome or fastidious than others. They are, for the most part, intelligent, well-meaning, good-hearted, orderly, and quiet people. Indeed, what has been said of this town is true of many hundred others; and it is the importance of understanding the case for the general benefit of all, and not the love of fault-finding, or a willingness to dissect a given community, that has induced us to take the trouble thus to examine somewhat closely a particular case. The people do not know what their own difficulties are. They have not looked patiently into the social changes their town has been undergoing, and of which their own lives have formed a part. They have not considered the effect of so much leisure and so much monotony upon their own tempers and characters. They are not aware of the social struggles in which they have been so covertly engaged. Show them that religion has little to do with their sectarian subdivisions; that their churches represent a common truth and a common Christianity, while their denominational names represent mainly personal and party jealousies; show them that their minister's faults are very much their own local disputes and jealousies reflected on him,—and no inconsiderable number will begin to think, for the first time, whether these church splits are necessary and useful, this multiplication of ministers in towns a good policy; much more, whether these incessant fault-findings with, and transplantations of, pastors are inevitable and without serious wrongfulness. This town might support

one strong and capable minister, who would feed them all well in perfect comfort. It starves four, and they starve the people no doubt in turn, to some degree. For what is the mental stimulus, what the independence, what the courage, growth, interest of a minister over a small parish, grumbling at the starving salary it pays, and frightening its pastor out of his mind with the fear of losing even that! A large parish is better natured, freer, happier, than a small one. Tempests occur oftener in teapots than in larger vessels. The comminuted size of our parishes is an evil in itself. It gives a terrible personality to each pewholder. The minister misses, or reckons on, every hearer, and notes the smile or frown on every face. He had better have neither time nor opportunity for such an inspection. In large parishes, it is impossible to turn them over every six months. They move slowly. The smaller the parish, the nimbler and the more restless; the more exacting, too, in the inverse ratio of its size, and the smallness of the salary it pays. The city parishes keep their ministers, because they are able to pay them, and don't grudge the salary,—because they have enough to occupy their minds, and other objects to expend their criticism on than the parson.

Let towns pause long before they break up their original parish life, and let every village or town of a few hundreds consider well the mischief they are perpetrating in starting a *new* society in the midst of two or three half-supported Christian churches. This process has gone on long enough. It is degrading our ministry. They are shrinking to the wretched places they are called to fill. Criticised, turned off like a lame horse, hurried from pillar to post, made to feel themselves burdens and targets for every sly and poisoned arrow, they grow dispirited, sick, timid, lifeless, afraid of the people they teach, who have

their children's bread in their careless fingers. What wonder they are not bright, original, earnest, free, and commanding? What wonder, that, when the happy, beloved, and handsomely supported minister of a large congregation in Boston comes among them, they compare their own minister's anxious, sickly, feeble voice, and languid, discouraged movements, with his clarion tone and manly bearing, and wonder why they can't get a man like *that* for their pastor! They might as well expect to raise pineapples in a snowbank. The remedy lies in a better self-knowledge. Our churches are suffering from a general social disorder which belongs to a transition period in our young, inexperienced and unformed American society. It is not religious, but social causes, that produce their weakness. We can have no more and no better ministers, till we study out this complaint, and learn the cure for it.

The cure is, of course, necessarily a slow one, and cannot be greatly accelerated by nostrums, or the most skilful active medication. It is inevitably on the way to its own remedy, through the experience of its evils, which will become intolerable, attract general attention, and awaken the new order of ideas and feelings through which reforms come about.

It cannot fail, ere long, to force itself upon so intelligent a people as those of New England, that the individualism and self-isolation, the independence of each other, and mutual jealousy of influence,—the first-fruits of democratic institutions, general equality, and common-school education,—which now disintegrate village life, multiply religious denominations, split up parishes, create petty social cliques, and, in the midst of reading, thinking, and moral communities, make religious institutions difficult to maintain, ministerial life hard, unsatisfying, and unsatis-

factory, and the life of churches feeble and disappointing,—it cannot fail soon to force itself upon us, that these necessary, and, in a provisional way, desirable results, are partial and fruitless, unless balanced by and married to the more permanent and characteristic attributes of humanity,—the social affections, the sense of community, the recognition of mutual interdependence, and that willingness to lean upon and to support each other, which are original instincts and final perfections, illustrating the beginnings, as they will allow the blessed consummation of human society,—attributes wanting only in that intermediate state through which modern and especially American life is now passing. A tribe of Indians, a clan of Highlanders, a band of Suliotes, whatever else they want, have cohesion, a sense of common interest and mutual dependence, ease and delight in each other's society, mutual fidelity, free-hearted hospitality, common sports, a common faith and worship. They have a rude, but a powerful fellowship and communion. Individuality, jealousy, and a shut-up self-insulation, trouble them very little. But there is no private culture, no independence of judgment, no individual rights. Now, Christianity and an ideal civilization demand that personal and private importance, self-respect, interior loneliness and solitude of relations to God and to conscience, should be developed and maintained; and our modern and specially our American institutions are favoring this side of human culture admirably. But precisely because in New England they are most successful and furthest advanced, do we begin here to experience the decay of that sense of solidarity of brotherhood and social fellowship, of tribal and neighborhood interest, which has brought *institutions* of all kinds, and especially the Church, into a chill and ungenial condition. A true Christian civilization will never be

reached until marked and distinctly developed individuals are as social, as brotherly, as dependent on each other, as happy in each other's society, and as open and unguarded in their confidences, as savages and uncultivated communities. At present it is only ignorant and uncultivated peoples and communities that are *really* social, fond of each other, easy and natural, not ashamed of their affections, their emotions, their piety, and their worship. If you want to see fellowship and cordial brotherhood, and a flowing ease and happiness in American life, you must get out of the realm of thrift and common schools and elegant homes and domestic finish, — you must go among the humbler Methodists and Baptists; or else, even in cities, turn to the Roman Catholics, and there, among the servants of the rich and the educated, find a class of people who are nothing in themselves, and mighty in each other, and in their community of affections, sympathies, and faith. If you want to see overflowing enjoyment and delight in each other, go to their social gatherings or to their religious meetings. Now, let no one say, after a superficial consideration, that we must be satisfied with choosing *between* these things; for, if it comes to that, I shall certainly vote for a return to the life of the affections, sympathies, and community of interests and feelings, rather than for a life of self-conscious, isolated intelligence, selfish, seclusive and cold as that is, with all its propriety and polish and personal pride. True civilization, and, above all, true Christianity harmonizes the extremes of human experience, — the individualism and the socialism, the private independence and the community of interests, the loneliness and the fellowship of man. We must have privacy in the home, with publicity in the common life. We must know how to bend the knee in the closet, without losing the disposition to kneel in the presence of fellow-worshippers. We must

have self-respect, and yet cultivate genial companionship, and recognize our dependence on each other. We must feel that our neighbors and townsmen are joys, helpers, providential educators, blessings and complements of our personal life, who can give us a hundred times more than we can give them, and who, as we learn to live in them and for them, will enlarge and universalize our life, and raise us to the true height and size of that humanity in which we first truly find ourselves. It is not too much to say, that so-called intelligence, culture, fastidiousness, and pride of personal character, left to themselves, narrow as much as they purify and exalt, and furnish a poor substitute for the breadth of common sympathies and instructive fellowship which they scorn as vulgar and passionate. It has been the sense of this which has given to the speculations of Rousseau and the poetry of Shelley, in defence of the life of instinct and uneducated freedom, all the truth they may seem to have. We must add to this necessary modern crusade in search of private and personal rights, of individual graces and attainments, another crusade in search of the lost sympathies, fellowships, and social affections which both the lowest and the highest — the first by instinct, and the last by reflection — know to be the richest part of our being and the glory of our nature, before we can lay any well-founded claim to social progress. We must not be exchanging, like the one-handed juggler, balls in the air, — the private rights *up*, when the social privileges are *down*, and *vice versa*, — but insist upon holding fast to *both*, and making them compatible with each other, and within the grasp of the same hand.

It is very hard to convince a people like our own, proud of their recently attained popular liberties, that they have not realized the whole glory and possibility of human

nature ; whereas most of them are unable even to define human nature, mistaking the *individual* for that humanity of which he is only an integrated particle. This is the age and country of self-gratulation, of self-assertion ; we must swiftly follow it up with an age of fellowship and community, based on our sense of membership in and of each other, if we hope to see humanity rounded out into its full and perfect wholeness.

Doubtless, these reflections may seem both far-fetched and fine-drawn to many, and by others be simply rejected as unsound and groundless. They lie aside from the more common paths of thought, and so may appear unpractical and even impertinent. But, if I am not wholly deceived, they are thoughts which will seem more seriously true and more worthy of consideration, the longer and the more patiently they are meditated ; and the more sagaciously they are sounded, the nearer shall we be at the bottom of the difficulty in our ecclesiastical life. If called on to give any practical directions on the result or embodiment of these views, I should perhaps say in part thus : 1. The fewer the churches in a village or town, provided ample accommodation for public worship exists, the better. Many churches multiply expenses and divide salaries, and so cheapen the ministry ; and they exaggerate and emphasize unimportant differences, and so hide common Christian truth in the hollows of sectarianism. They help to part church raiment, so that one runs away with a sleeve, and another with a breadth, and another with a patch, until the whole seamless garment is found nowhere. 2. The *larger* the parishes are (within certain reasonable bounds), the better. First, because they are then able to support the ministry and religious institutions on a generous scale. Second, because a large parish is always more easily suited than a small one ; being better

tempered, less given to cliques and squabbles, balanced by its own size, and anchored by its own weight. Third, because only such parishes, other things being equal, keep, their ministers for long terms, and enjoy the advantages of a settled state of things.

3. We want fewer ministers and better ones. The whole recent aspect of ecclesiastical affairs shows, that the people will not long put up with ministers who are without decided ministerial gifts, — and these are rare and precious. The multiplication of *ministers* is due to useless and injurious multiplication of *parishes*, and to a corresponding lowering of the standard of competency with the standard of support. More ministers are called for by the present enormous expansion of the churches, than there are *priestly natures furnished by divine Providence*. Had we only a quarter of the churches, and all of them filled, we should need only a quarter of the ministers; and only about a quarter in the ministry are fit to be there, by natural and providential vocation. All good or educated or pious or able men are not qualified for the pulpit and the pastorate. There needs to be special gifts (and they are among the rarest gifts) for the successful filling of this great function.

4. The diminution of preachers and pastors, and the expansion of churches and parishes, would bring back the original necessity and glory of the Christian churches; namely, the necessity for using the gifts of the people, according to their supply, in the nurture and ministry of churches, so that deacons and deaconesses, elders and visitors of the sick, and teachers and assistants of all kinds in the various inferior functions of a parish or church, would again be restored. What apology is there for calling in a dozen shepherds to watch a dozen sheep! Our ministers, with their little flocks, have no obvious

need of helpers: what is there for them to do? Give them a larger work, and they will become superintendents and, of necessity, call on all the available ability and rightness of spirit and teaching faculty there is near them, to aid their crowded labors. In this way, that co-operation, complexity, variety, richness, which are now so deplorably wanting, might be restored. It does not follow that all large parishes have this crown of glory, — a body of helpful laymen. For a loss of the very idea of a church exists in too many of them. But it is clear enough that a large church *favors* this advantage.

5. Our ministers need to bring a more solid education, a more careful discipline, a more methodical conception and order into their work. They can only stay long where they show that they have plans of usefulness, and are competent to carry them out. They cannot form these plans, or carry them out, where they are not welcomed as to a stable position and a fixed work. Our itinerancy, without the Methodist rule, has all its disadvantages and none of its merits. We need in the ministry, men who do solid, permanent and broad work; we need in the parishes, people *who expect this*. We can have neither without a much more candid and profound consideration of the difficulties which now hinder this consummation.

6. As to the general subject of the social life of our towns and villages, let every man and woman of thoughtfulness, who loves the country, our institutions, the Church, and the cause of humanity, consider what are the obligations of good Christians and enlightened citizens, to correct the faults, to enlarge the views, to widen the sympathies, to enrich the customs, to beautify, soften, and sweeten the life of the communities in which they dwell.

SHALL WE MULTIPLY CHURCHES?

WE desire to make a few observations with regard to the article concluded in the present number on Ecclesiastical Life in New-England Towns. We do so, not for the sake of calling attention to the article, because we are sure that it will command the attention of all who receive this Journal; and that all who read it will appreciate the catholicity of sentiment, as well as the keenness of observation, which it betrays, while they will recognize also the practical good sense of its suggestions. Neither do we refer to it exactly for the purpose of criticism, except it may be for its too broadly assuming that the town described is a fair type of New-England towns. We simply wish to supplement it by a few words on the other side. The article, as it stands, would, we fear, be rather discouraging to some honest and earnest efforts now being made in several places for the building-up of a liberal Church, and would afford a plea for those who are holding back from such attempts, who have now only their own inertness to justify them, and would be glad to seize on such an eloquent excuse.

We do not wish to withdraw one word of what Dr. Bel-
lows has written; but only to add, with all earnestness, that there are other places than those which he describes, where precisely the same subdivisions are being made, yet with such a spirit and such a purpose that they must result in the quickening and exalting, and not in the quenching and belittling, of the ecclesiastical life. And, on the other hand, we could point to towns in New England where the number of churches in proportion to the population is small enough to meet the views of the most ardent advocate of consolidation, but where the deadness of religious interest, and the meagreness of ministerial support, and the wretchedness of

the spiritual nutriment afforded to the people, are as marked as one can complain of anywhere.

As an offset to the class which the article describes, let us consider, for a moment, one of these localities. There is population enough to fill the churches to overflowing,—enough to pay a munificent salary, and to secure a minister full of grace and power, and to give him such a happy lot and such a splendid field of labor as to call out the best faculties of his soul; while he will have all those advantages referred to, such as the balance of forces and interests secured by the largeness of the congregation. In such a place, there should be the very perfection of religious activity. Why is it, that, on the contrary, every thing languishes so? Go to such a town, and observe the cause of the religious indifference; and one of the first things you will notice is the fact, that among those who show a disregard of religious institutions are some of the most upright and conscientious and intelligent people of the neighborhood. This fact will only puzzle one the more, until he goes to hear the preaching in the churches; and then he will hardly wonder that bright, thinking people are not disposed to listen every week to doctrines and sentiments which afford neither satisfaction to their reason, nor guidance to their moral natures, nor stimulus to their spiritual affections.

If such unsatisfactory teaching had come upon them all at once, it might reasonably be said, Why do they not have that better kind of minister they might so easily support? But the truth is, the doctrine taught is what was generally acceptable fifty years ago; and, while the gradual progress of enlightenment through books and events has lifted a portion of the community into a different habit of mind, there is still a portion who reverently cling to the old ideas: and the chances are, that, for a while, the rejection by the rest of unsatisfying doctrines leads only to indifference to

all religious teaching, until they happen to be attracted by something their sense approves.

A few days ago we received a letter from a person residing in such a community as we have described, in which, after lamenting the thin attendance at the churches, and the lack of religious interest, the writer says :—

“No wonder, considering what we hear. The sermon this morning was a long elaborate discourse to prove the doctrine of total depravity, and the power of the Devil, whom the preacher appeared to believe omnipotent in the world. I should hardly suppose this minister *believed in God*, if his discourse could be accepted as an exposition of his faith. Last sabbath I listened to the Methodist minister. He preaches with vigor, and apparent feeling, but still the old dogmatic theology; and the man seemed so coarse, not in words, but manner, that I had little patience in hearing him.

The consequence of all this kind of teaching is, that sensible people stay away from church. There is a large population spread around; and a lady who is a member of the Orthodox Church was lamenting to me a few days since that there was so little interest in religion, so few persons members of churches, or even attending them. Now, I believe, that, in many instances, there is *too much* true religion in the hearts of the people for them to be satisfied with the churches they have: they cannot receive the doctrines, and so they stay at home; and the children grow up with no definite ideas on the subject. How I wish some good, earnest man could be sent here to stir up the people! one who can reach the hearts and consciences of his hearers, and awaken them to a better life, not so much by preaching theology as a pure Christianity. He might do a work in this region as important, if not exactly the same, or so extensive, as that of the Wesleys.”

Now, what shall we say in answer to such a longing? What shall we say, when a few earnest people in such a community agree in declaring, that the doctrine they are compelled every week to hear is repugnant to their religious sense, and that they yearn after some better spiritual food;

that they feel that their children are being filled with impressions of God and life and duty which are dwarfing to their natures, while they know that there is a kind of presentation of religious truths that would stimulate and inspire, that would kindle in them the love of God, and a generous inspiration after the divine? And when such people make up their minds to use some positive exertion in order to secure such teaching, and thus show that it is something they value as much as they value their house or horse or farm or school, and then come to us, and represent that they can no longer rest content, and that, if this Association will help them a little, they will establish a church whose teaching shall not only satisfy themselves, but awaken a religious interest in many who are indifferent now, — what shall we say?

Shall we answer them, "Oh! do not multiply churches; wait till the established ones are filled"? Shall we not rather say, "God speed! and if you are willing to give up old associations, and part from those who have been sitting with you in those pews for years, and whose greeting you value as you meet on Sundays in the porch, because there is something in religious truth which you value more, then God be thanked for the earnestness of conviction and the warmth of desire which leads you to separate, and build up your little church."

For ourselves, we have always felt that the greatest glory and blessing of Protestantism consisted, not in the mere riddance of Papal errors, whether of polity or belief, but in that earnestness of individual conviction which led men *to protest!*

At some future time, we hope to continue the subject by suggesting other remedies, besides those which Dr. Bellows commends, for the evils which he describes. At present, we will simply add that the class of communities to which we have just referred is by no means small.

During the summer, several of our ministers have used their vacations in going, under the auspices of this Association, to preach in various towns in New England where Unitarian preaching has never been heard before. Some of their reports will be printed in another number of this Journal, and will amply confirm what we have said. It is almost thrilling to hear how some of those to whom they spoke, who had seemed indifferent to religion, welcomed it and warmed to it when presented under the glowing yet rational teaching of our liberal faith.

THE ENGLISH UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

THE Unitarian denomination in England differs in many respects from ours in America, as regards its position and modes of action. It is all the more interesting to learn, as we do from the "London Inquirer" and "Herald," that the same elements are at work there as here, and, by a certain law of uniformity in the progress of human thought and feeling, precisely the same problems of denominational action are being agitated on both sides the water, entirely independent, so far as we can see, of any influence upon each other.

At a recent meeting of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, Rev. Mr. Bache, a clergyman evidently highly esteemed among our English brethren, proposed to graft a creed upon the Association, and urged the point with a degree of earnestness which shows how seriously it weighs upon his heart.

A large majority of the Association, however, declined the proposition, but with a tone of mingled tenderness and firmness which it is gratifying to observe. There was no bitterness and no ill-feeling, but only a calm determination to maintain the principles of freedom. We quote a notice of the movement from the "Unitarian Herald:" —

“Let us not forget that the question thus raised among us is the outcome of a deeper question still. The principle of freedom is on its trial. Are we to suppose that the tides and currents of aroused mental activity, which are shaking the Churches around us to their foundations, should pass by without trying our Church of what sort it is, and whether it be built upon the sand or upon the rock? Not so. Not only the creed-bound Churches, but Free Churches are upon their trial; and while we are watching the piles of ancient formula and the floodgates of subscription, and moralizing about their utter inefficiency, lo! the question comes suddenly home to ourselves, whether we dare remain on our rock of freedom, or whether the waves and the winds shall scare us from it. That any alteration of the kind should really be carried, or could even command more than a very small portion of votes among those who would rally from all over the country to such a contest, Mr. Bache cannot expect. But there are some victories which are only less calamitous than defeat; and it would be felt as a calamity throughout the whole Unitarian body, should two of our most honored men, such as Mr. Bache and Mr. Madge, leave the society, because it refused to alter a constitution which has stood in grand simplicity for forty years, in order to purge its muster-roll of men, who however inconsistent it may seem to Mr. Bache, do sympathize so heartily with its general object as to maintain their connection with it.”

Undoubtedly, the whole question involved may come before us for discussion in this Journal; for it is one which is not only agitating all the branches of our own denomination, but is creeping in upon other Christian denominations, and, mooted in sermons and ecclesiastical debates, promises to become one of the most prominent religious questions of our day.

At present, however, we only seek to call attention to the similarity of the experience in regard to it in the English and American branches of our own denomination. So far as we can see, in both countries the proposition to

adopt and bind the denomination by a creed did not arise from narrowness and bigotry, but was made by men of acknowledged worth and wisdom and liberality, and grew out of their sincere conviction of what is due to the cause of truth.

On the other hand, the opposition to it is not from loose thinkers, or men indifferent to religious truth, nor even altogether from those radical in their belief, but from some of those most prominent for piety and religious sincerity, and often for evangelical sentiment; and their opposition is based on equally sincere convictions of what is due to the cause of truth.

We note this simply as what we believe to be the fact in regard to the present aspect of the discussion. Never was a religious question entered upon with a better spirit; and we doubt not that the controversy will result to the glory of Christ and the best interests of his Church.

REPORT OF REV. CALVIN STEBBINS, MISSIONARY OF THE A. U. A. IN CHARLESTON, S.C.

DEAR SIR,—The money raised at the meeting of the American Unitarian Association in Hollis-street Church, and forwarded to me through you, has been distributed among the suffering of Charleston. It is right that some account should be given of the charities thus placed in my hands; and, without going into particulars, I will endeavor to lay before you in a general way the condition of many unfortunate people in that city, and what has been done for their relief.

At this moment a large number of the inhabitants of Charleston have no other support than the rations dealt out by the Government. Their own means of support have been swept away; their property has either been destroyed, or become, for the present, unavailable. It will

be hard for the people of the North to realize the true state of affairs, or see how a people once — and that not long ago — rich could be reduced to such real want. And yet many of these people are to-day so poor, that, if they do not succeed in getting the ticket for rations renewed, they have to go hungry until they can. It would be too much to say that a majority were in this condition; but there are large numbers so.

The sufferers may be divided into five classes:—

1. The refugees. Among these are those who were driven from the islands, and have been wandering about the country for the last two or three years, robbed first by Wheeler, then by the various raiders, and finally by the negroes. To this class belong many planters from the lower districts, who, on account of the disturbed state of the country, have fled to the city as a place of safety. Their scanty stores were exhausted long ago. Exposure and a change of living have brought on sickness. The number in this class is not large; but they are great sufferers.

2. There are those who were once rich, but whom fire and war have made poor. Many were absent from the city at the time of the occupation, and had their houses sacked. They lost every thing,—provisions, furniture, and clothing. Their lands, and in some cases their houses, remain; but these can neither be eaten nor sold, and thus the owners are not only in actual want, but helpless. An old man of seventy, in describing his own case, described this class: "My furniture was carried off; my wardrobe was taken, leaving me only the suit I have on. Nothing was left that I could use, or turn into money; and, for the last three months, I have not had two cents to rub together."

3. To another class belong those who, in former days, lived upon the hire of servants, and the income of money invested in banks. The negroes are free, and the banks ruined beyond hope. This class is largely made up of

ladies and old persons. Many of these are barefooted, in want of decent clothing; and the sick are suffering beyond measure for want of suitable food.

4. A fourth class includes those who, through an inflamed zeal or bad advice, sold all they had, and bought what are called "Confederate bonds." All classes have suffered more or less in this way; but many have lost all. Many sold their best furniture, their houses and lands, and bought bonds. The day before I left Charleston, a poor woman showed me sixty thousand dollars in this stuff. In it was invested her all: she had not saved enough from the wreck of her once-handsome property to buy a pint of milk for her baby, which was literally starving to death. Such cases are not rare.

5. Yet another class includes those who were always poor, both white and black. The struggle which the South has carried on against the Government brought distress, even in "Confederate times," upon the families of soldiers. And now that the "rich man's war and the poor man's fight" is over, there are thousands who have had no part in this war, who are in reality suffering all that a people can suffer. He must be revengeful indeed, who could wish to inflict upon these people — the people of Charleston — any thing more than falls to their every-day lot.

While the Government rations last, most of these people are in a way to live; but, the moment sickness comes, they are exposed to the most frightful suffering. Many families have sold their jewelry, and plate even to the last spoon, to provide little luxuries, such as tea, sugar, &c. for the sick. I have sometimes asked for a glass of water when visiting people who were once well off, and had it served in a teacup; the lady excusing the cup, as she had sold all her glass to procure nourishment for a sick member of the family. You will see at a glance how helpless the sick and aged are. There are many persons in decline,

who have not tasted tea or coffee for three or four months, and have not seen any thing but rice and smoked meat during that time. The prescriptions of the physician lie upon the table unfilled, and the little luxuries which he orders cannot be procured. Several of the most eminent physicians of the city have told me, that many of their patients have died from starvation.

Such is the state of affairs. The great work of charity is with the sick and the aged. And among these a large part of the money has been distributed. I have visited myself one hundred and thirty-one families; and the whole number of families relieved will not fall short of one hundred and seventy. Some have been visited only once; others, four or five times, as the case might demand. The amount spent upon single families has varied from one to twenty-five dollars, according to the necessities of the case. About half the money (six hundred and seventy dollars) was invested in flour and pork, canned chicken, turkey, and beef, condensed milk, sugar, tea, coffee, maizena and crackers, gin, whiskey, brandy, and wines. Two hundred and fifty dollars were loaned to persons who expected to have their property in their own hands again, and preferred to be helped in that way. Sixty-five dollars was sent to families in distress in different parts of the state. The remainder has been used to fill the prescriptions of the physician, to pay nurses for the sick, to move persons from one locality to another; indeed, it has been used for every purpose which would alleviate human suffering.

The funds placed in my hands have been distributed among the suffering, without regard to color, class, or political or religious opinion. In this work, the fact has been kept steadily in view, that any great charity is quite likely to become a "Universal Sluggard-and-scoundrel-protection Society." While great pains have been taken to use these funds in such a way that they should be

a blessing to those in distress, I am well aware that I have been imposed upon; that I have sometimes believed that people in the higher walks of life had a decent respect for common honesty, contrary to the fact as taught by experience. But these cases of dishonesty — these cases of cheating the sick and destitute — would be forgotten, if they were the acts of “mean whites,” and perhaps ought to be now.

The other side has more interest. I might tell you of aid rendered to patient sufferers, who are struggling to keep their heads above water, — who are working against hope; of ladies who never knew what it was to work, who are now living on scanty and coarse fare, and perilling their health with the needle, which they ply early and late, for a remuneration which does not amount, in many cases, to over twenty-five cents per day; of the families of soldiers who will never return, or who have returned, broken in health, to be a burden upon those whose energies are already over-taxed, — of the victims of suspended industry and of languishing commerce.

Those who contributed to these funds can never know the amount of suffering which has been relieved. Nothing is more certain than that one dollar has sometimes saved a human life.

In closing, I wish to speak of two or three persons who have done much to relieve me of the perplexity of the work. Capt. Boutelle has given me the benefit of his knowledge of the people, and his counsel; and Mrs. Boutelle spent her whole time while in the city in the work of relief.

As to the prospect, and what will be this winter, I, for one, can see no light. As the cold weather sets in, clothing of all kinds will be in great demand, and a large class of the people will then, as now, be subjects of charity.

Yours, &c.

CALVIN STEBBINS.

APPEAL. — We have ample testimony to confirm what Mr. Stebbins declares in regard to the amount of destitution in Charleston, and the vast good effected by the money raised for its relief at the annual meeting of the American Unitarian Association. Accordingly, after careful investigation of the matter, the Committee on Middle and Southern States present an appeal to the benevolent, whether in our churches or not, for another contribution. The money received will be expended without regard to sect or color, and on the principles set forth in the Report. We are fully satisfied that through none of the existing channels of distribution can charity be so economically and impartially bestowed as through our own missionary as proposed. Money sent to the Secretary of the Association for this purpose will be acknowledged in this journal.

CHURCH EDIFICES IN GENERAL, AND THE NEW UNITARIAN CHURCH IN WOBURN, MASS., IN PARTICULAR.

IF the societies of our denomination could know beforehand how contagious the spirit of religious enterprise is, how new life is usually developed by earnest labor; how new friends rally to a cause, and very naturally too, when they see the old ones determined that it shall succeed, — they certainly would not defer from year to year, as they do in many cases, the work of providing themselves with suitable church accommodations.

How frequently it happens, that a society commences services in a hall or schoolroom, and continues in it for years; or, worse still, is driven from place to place, often into unattractive, and sometimes into very uncomfortable, quarters, losing constantly the interest and influence which a new enterprise is very likely to create, till at last, when it sees that it must have a church, a religious home, with all its blessed and holy associations, or disband, and give up in despair, it finds that it has really less ability of every sort, less hope, and less heart, than it had when it commenced.

Or the old church is filled, and there is a demand for pews that cannot be supplied. The tide sets in the right direction; but the society delays action. Month after month, and perhaps year after year, the report is circulated through the community, that there are no pews to be had. But at length this very report makes pew-room enough, and to spare, by turning people in other directions. There are many societies in our denomination, that have lost scores of families from this cause, when new churches, with ampler and more suitable accommodations, would have very greatly increased their numbers and influence.

Or a debt is to be paid; or, in our large cities, the population shifts,—and removal, and the erection of a church in a new neighborhood, or a lingering death, and finally, certain extinction as a society, is the alternative. The time for action comes,—an auspicious time; and the history of many societies shows that *very much* depends upon the use that is made of the golden moment.

The Unitarian Society in Woburn, Mass., has from the first contained wise and resolute men, who have never felt that the money given to religious purposes was thrown away or poorly invested. Their motto has been, and still is, "*It is wisest to do what ought to be done*;" and as a crisis came in the history of that society, when they were obliged to decide whether they would simply try to stand still, and thus take the chance of going backwards, or meet the emergency like men, and build a new church, they decided upon the latter course, and commenced at once, notwithstanding the war was upon the country, and the prices of labor and all kinds of building materials were very greatly enhanced. They purchased by far the most eligible site in the town, and erected a church 61x90 feet, at a cost of a little upwards of forty-two thousand dollars. Including those in the gallery, which is in the front end, it contains a hundred and fifty-six pews, and is one of the

finest specimens of architecture, and one of the most beautiful and most commodious churches, in the Commonwealth.

The old church contained eighty-six pews, and was almost never crowded; usually fairly filled. As the report had been long and widely circulated, that no pews could be had, families on moving into town generally went elsewhere. The result was, that, for two or three years before leaving the old church, the society did not and could not increase, which, in a growing town like Woburn, is equivalent to a constant relative decline; but the mere fact of building a new church, of providing themselves with such superior accommodations, created so much interest amongst themselves, and won so many new friends, that now, though they have been in the new church only four months, yet the hundred and twenty-six pews upon the floor are fuller than the eighty-six were in the old church; and such an impulse has been given to the society, its confidence and self-respect have so greatly increased, that it will be easier for their minister to fill the new church, and keep it full, than it was to fill the old one, which was but little more than half as large.

Their success in paying for their church has been very marked; and for the method adopted, for the noble example they have set to other societies, they deserve the thanks of the Christian public. They would not levy the entire cost of the church upon the pews, as it would have made them too expensive for people in limited circumstances. They therefore raised a purse of twenty thousand dollars by subscription, and presented it to the society, as a *gift* to be applied on the debt; and yet, with the appraisal of the pews thus reduced from what it must have been if the twenty thousand dollars had not been raised, they have sold nearly eighteen thousand dollars worth, so that but four thousand or five thousand dollars remain unpaid.

All in all, the success of the enterprise has greatly exceeded the expectation of its most sanguine friends; and it is to be hoped that other societies, similarly situated, may be stimulated thereby to imitate their example. The Woburn Society now ranks with the very best in the neighborhood of Boston.

E. F.

MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

Sept. 11, 1865. — Present, Messrs. Palfrey, Kidder, Hedge, Clarke, Hinckley, Livermore, Smith, Denny, Fox, and Lowe.

The reports of Committees, the first business in order, having been laid on the table, the Secretary communicated to the Board the recent death of George Livermore, Esq., one of the Vice-Presidents of the Association.

The following resolution, offered by Dr. Hedge, was then unanimously adopted, and the Secretary was requested to send a copy of it to the family of the deceased: —

Resolved, That, in the death of George Livermore, this Board has lost an able, judicious, and most valued coadjutor, and the Liberal Church a faithful and devoted servant, whose purity of life, whose meek and pious spirit expressed by his gentle manners, whose zeal in every good work, and noble consecration to the cause of freedom and humanity, as shown in the recent war with treason and rebellion, are shining illustrations of the power of the faith he professed to ennoble the mind and to sanctify the life.

The Secretary then presented to the Board the following communication from Dr. Stebbins, which was read: —

CAMBRIDGE, Sept. 6, 1865.

REV. CHARLES LOWE, Secretary A.U.A.

MY DEAR SIR, — The time has come in which I may properly fulfil my original purpose of withdrawing from the Executive Committee, a purpose which I most unwisely allowed myself to be dissuaded from, temporarily.

I believe I have communicated to yourself or the Board, all my own views respecting the work before us, and how it seems to me it may best be done.

I therefore resign my place as a member of the Board, with the ardent prayer, that the noble purposes it has in view may be successfully accomplished through the abundant means which are now in its hands.

Fraternally yours,

RUFUS P. STEBBINS.

It was voted to accept the resignation of Dr. Stebbins; and the following resolution, offered by Mr. Smith, was then unanimously adopted: —

Resolved, That this Board have received with much regret the resignation of their valued associate, the Rev. Dr. Stebbins; that cordially recognizing his long-continued, faithful, and efficient services as a member of the Executive Committee, they desire to place on record their appreciation of his wisdom in counsel, his energy as an executive officer, his large familiarity with the history, present condition, and wants of the denomination, and his single-hearted devotion to its interests; and that they will cherish with especial pleasure the recollection of his untiring labors during the last year of his official connection with the Association.

It having been voted to proceed with the regular business of the meeting, the *Committee on the New-England States* presented the reports of Rev. Drs. Farley, Osgood, Hill, and Thompson, and Rev. Messrs. Holland, Putnam, Ames, Lincoln, Tilden, and Torricelli, concerning missionary work done by them; which reports were referred to the Secretary, to be used as might seem to him best.

The Committee on the Western States reported that Rev. Joseph Angier had returned from St. Paul, Minn., and confirmed the favorable reports already received in regard to the Society in that place. Rev. William G. Scandlin had been engaged by the Committee to go out to St. Paul, to make a permanent settlement there, provided, on investigation, the place appeared as hopeful as he believed it to be.

Another New-England clergyman had consented to go, on the same terms and with a similar purpose, to Sheboygan, Wis., or such other place as might finally be determined on; and the Committee were in communication with other gentlemen, in regard to other very important places, where there was need of permanent pastors.

For such objects as these, they asked an appropriation of five hundred dollars, to be used at their discretion, the items to be afterward reported to the Board; which request was granted.

This Committee also submitted a report just received from Rev. Charles H. Brigham, giving a favorable account of the movement for the formation of a society at Ann Arbor, Mich.

The Committee on Publications reported, that, in accordance

with the permission granted at the last meeting, they had sent the publications of the Association to the following institutions, in response to applications received : State Normal School, Bridgewater, Mass.; Circulating Library Association, Davenport, Iowa; City Library, Concord, N.H.; Delaware County Academy, Delhi, N.Y., and Parish Libraries of Unitarian Societies at Groton Junction and Winchendon, Mass.

This Committee also made the following recommendations, all of which were adopted : —

1. That a limited number of copies of all the Army Tracts be printed on fine paper, — some of them to be placed in the hands of the authors of the tracts, for such disposition as they might wish to make of them; and the rest to be sold, at a remunerative price, to persons who might like to preserve them as connected with an interesting period of work.

2. That an appropriation be made for the purchase of a number of copies of the "Monthly Religious Magazine" for September, containing the address of Rev. E. H. Sears, before the Alumni of the Cambridge Divinity School; the copies to be distributed by the Committee, as might seem to them best.

3. That fifty dollars be appropriated for the purpose of carrying out a plan, begun several years ago, of procuring a complete collection of all matter ever published in the interest of Unitarian Christianity, to be deposited in the rooms of the Association.

4. That Charles E. Norton, Esq., be requested to loan to the Association the plates of Professor Norton's Reply to Strauss, in order that it might be published by them with a supplementary note, to be prepared under the direction of the Committee, which should consider the latter arguments of Dr. Strauss.

5. That an offer made by Rev. George R. Noyes, D.D., of the plates of his Translation of the Book of Job, be accepted, and that the Committee have authority to draw the sum needed for their purchase and repair.

6. That an agreement be made with Walker, Fuller, & Co. to purchase fifty copies of the "Works of Orville Dewey, D.D.," whenever they publish another edition.

The Committee on the Middle and Southern States reported, that various appeals had come to them for aid for the sufferers in Charleston, S.C., and most emphatic testimonials as to the

good accomplished by the money raised at the Annual Meeting of the Association, and disbursed by its missionary, Rev. Calvin Stebbins; and they proposed, unless otherwise directed by the Board, to make an appeal, by means of public meetings and the press, for money to be employed for the relief of the needy in Charleston, under the direction of Mr. Stebbins. This plan was approved by the Board.

The Committee on the Pacific Coast reported, that Rev. Charles G. Ames had consented to go to California, under the direction of the Association; and authority was given to the Committee to employ him, as missionary of the Association on the Pacific Coast, for one year.

This Committee also reported, that letters had been received from Nevada, representing that there was good opportunity for missionary work in that Territory.

The subject specially assigned for consideration at this meeting — an appropriation to the Meadville School — was taken up; and after the reading of the reports, presented at the last meeting, and some discussion, one thousand five hundred dollars was appropriated, to be used in such manner as the Trustees of the school should deem best.

A Committee of three, consisting of Messrs. Kidder, Clarke, and Hinckley, was appointed to nominate a Vice-President and Director to fill the vacancies existing through the death of Mr. Livermore, and the resignation of Dr. Stebbins.

The President then presented to the Board the following address from the British and Foreign Unitarian Association:—

To the President, Officers, and Members of the American Unitarian Association.

DEAR CHRISTIAN BRETHERN,— We, the President, Officers, and Members of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, assembled this day at our Fortieth Anniversary Meeting, feel it a solemn duty to address you on the subject of the great crisis in the history of your Republic, and on the duties which in consequence devolve especially on you, and in some degree on all the lovers of liberty and human progress throughout the world.

We cannot restrain the profession of our profound sympathy

with you and your countrymen in the calamity which has recently befallen you, and our horror at the dastardly crime by which you have been deprived of a patriotic and distinguished President, in whom your Republic had just expressed its continued and unwavering confidence. We desire to record to the world our admiration of the character of your late President. We recognize in his consistent efforts to put down slavery, his calmness in danger, and in his forbearance and mercy in the hour of victory, elements of true moral greatness. And we deeply deplore the loss which his death has inflicted on you, at a time when you stand in especial need, in the conduct of public affairs, of the calm wisdom and the courage and forbearance of a Christian statesman.

While we give utterance to our sorrow, we would at the same time congratulate you on the prospect of the early cessation of civil war in your borders, and of the immediate and entire abolition of the horrible pest and curse of slavery.

It is our earnest desire and prayer, that your statesmen, aided by the united efforts of your best citizens, may be enabled to mitigate the inconveniences and sufferings and avert the dangers of the present crisis, so that the transition from slavery to free labor may be effected safely, and with the smallest possible suffering to all classes.

We do not doubt, that you, as a body of men professing Christianity in its purest and most benignant form, will feel it a sacred duty to do what you can to restrain wrath, and to promote peace and love. May it be your honorable distinction to aid in the removal of prejudice, and the subjugation of all malignant passions, that the future career and history of the United States of America may be one of true and cordial union, and of great increasing prosperity.

If, in preparing for their new condition the freedmen, now for the first time introduced to the enjoyment of their natural rights, help from other lands is needed, be assured of our sympathy, and our desire to join in the holy work of restoring a large and injured class of our fellow men to the dignity and enjoyment of freedom.

We rejoice with you, that some of the obstacles which have hitherto impeded the progress of pure Christianity in the Southern States, will now be removed; and that new opportunities of

doing good, and of proclaiming a gospel of freedom, peace, and love, are opened before you.

We rejoice to know, that a spirit of union and zeal, such as has never before been manifested, now animates the members of the Unitarian Church in America. We desire to express our admiration of the sacrifices and the effects they are making, and we cordially wish them God-speed.

We desire to strengthen the bonds of union and amicable feeling which should exist between them that love civil and religious liberty on both sides of the Atlantic. Between your citizens and ours, there should be uninterrupted confidence and sympathy. United as we are with you in the profession of the same views of a great and merciful God, and of a compassionate and benignant Saviour, we solemnly record our hope and trust that nothing may ever occur to weaken our fraternal regard, or hinder zealous co-operation in the things that make for the peace and welfare of all nations on the face of the globe, and of all classes of society.

(Signed) William D. Prier, President for the year; Jerome Murch, President elect; John James Tayler, B. A.; John Bowring, K.B., L.L.D., F.R.S., F.L.S., M.R.A.S., &c.; G. Vance Smith, B.A.; Alfred Lawrence; Thomas Sadler, Ph. D., Henry Bicknell, John T. Hart, W. N. Coupland, E. I. Nettlefold, J. Pracy, Thomas L. Marshall, Henry Ierson, M.A., H. I. Preston, J. H. G. Munn, Edward Talbot, John Ellis Mace, Robert E. B. Maclellan, James Phillips.

R. BROOK ASPLAND, M.A., *Secretary*.

After reading the above address, the President read the following reply which he had prepared, which was unanimously accepted by the Board, and referred to a Committee, consisting of the President and Secretary, to be properly engrossed, signed, and despatched:—

To the President, Officers, and Members of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association.

DEAR BRETHREN,—Your address to the President, Officers, and Members of the American Unitarian Association, has been laid before us this day, at our first meeting since it came to the hands of our Secretary. We receive it with respect and gratitude.

Your regrets for the death of the late Chief Magistrate of our country are welcome to us. You rightly judge him to have been a wise, courageous, humane, and patriotic statesman.

We value whatever measure of sympathy has in foreign countries been accorded to our Government and people during the contest which is now brought to a successful close. The strife would have been less protracted, and less afflictive to both conquerors and conquered, had a friendly sentiment abroad been more widely diffused and more earnest. Especially we now prize the expression of it from you as our fellow-believers in the glorious gospel of truth, righteousness, peace, and love.

We estimate, like yourselves, the vast blessing of the "abolition of the horrible pest and curse of slavery," — a blessing worth the great woes which its acquisition has cost us.

We cordially respond to your hope and expectation, that, as far as the permanent interests of the country and of humanity admit, the bad men whose conspiracy against civilization, freedom, and God, has been baffled, will be leniently dealt with by our rulers.

We do not fail to consider the solemn responsibilities which an untried though most auspicious condition of things imposes on the people of this nation. In fulfilling the duties which are before us, and to which we address ourselves without elation and without distrust, should we see occasion for the aid of enlightened and Christian men of other lands, we shall find encouragement in the assurance that yours will not be wanting.

We desire to study the things which make for peace with all men, and to strengthen all ties of fraternity with those who are of the same household of a generous and life-giving faith.

After the reading of this communication, the Board adjourned to Monday, October 9.

LETTER FROM SOUTHERN UNITARIAN SOCIETY, AND REPLY.

THE following correspondence is published in accordance with a vote of the Executive Committee, and was inadvertently omitted in the last number:—

At a special meeting of the Committee of the Southern Unitarian Society, Avenue-place, Southampton, May 21, 1865, the Rev. Edward Kell, M.A.F.S.A., in the chair, it was resolved unanimously, on the motion of Mr. Robert Duncan, seconded by Mr. John Lee:—

That the Committee of the Southern Unitarian Society, “established in the south of England in 1801, for the promotion of religious knowledge and the practice of virtue by the distribution of books,” feeling a deep and affectionate interest in the welfare of their Unitarian Christian brethren in the United States, beg, in behalf of the members of the Society, to tender to the members of the American Unitarian Association, and through them to their American Unitarian brethren generally, their sincere condolence on the atrocious assassination of their noble and beloved President, who so ably and wisely steered the vessel of the State in a crisis of peculiar difficulty and peril. They heartily congratulate their fellow-believers on the legislative abolition of slavery, for the extermination of which so many of them have made heroic sacrifices, and trust that, freed from this impediment of their national elevation, they may, by the blessing of God, pursue a career of increased prosperity; and they fervently pray that every succeeding year may cement the bond of amity between two nations linked together by so many ties of kindred, liberty, and religion.

Secretary, Edmund Kell.

Treasurer, Edward Dixon, J.P.

Committee, Robert Duncan, John Watson, M.D., John Lee, Henry Simpson, Robert Berry, Thomas Lasans.

EDMUND KELL, *Secretary*.

BOSTON, July 13, 1865.

TO REV. EDMUND KELL, &c.,

Committee of the Southern Unitarian Society, in England.

I am instructed by the Executive Committee of the American Unitarian Association to acknowledge the receipt of your letter with its expression of sympathy and kindly feeling towards the Unitarians of the United States, and of condolence at the assassination of the late President of our nation.

The Committee have caused the letter to be published in our denominational journal and newspapers, and desire to return to

you their cordial thanks, and to reciprocate the sentiments of friendship and interest which you so kindly express.

It would be idle to disguise the fact of our disappointment that such sympathy was withheld, at the time when we needed it most, in a cause which has in no respect changed except by its ultimate success; but we believe that this was only because of a misapprehension of the nature of our struggle, and that better opportunities for mutual acquaintance alone are needed, in order to bind us closely together in sentiment and in action.

We watch your denominational prosperity with almost the same interest as our own. Some of the names of our English brethren are as familiar here as on your side of the ocean; and such an expression of sympathy as your letter conveys, gives us a new feeling of strength.

In the bonds of Christian fellowship.

CHARLES LOWE,

Secretary of the American Unitarian Association.

INTELLIGENCE.

THE UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK met on Monday, Sept. 4, and elected the following officers for the ensuing year: President, Rev. Frederic A. Farley, D.D.; Vice-President, Peter Cooper; Treasurer, Richard Warren; Secretary, John W. Cory; Directors, Robert M. Field, Nathan Chandler, E. S. Mills, David B. Halsted, Rev. Alfred P. Putnam, Rev. Samuel Osgood, D.D.

Mr. JOSEPH MAY, a graduate of the Cambridge Divinity School, in the last class, was ordained as pastor of the society in Yonkers, N.Y., on Thursday, Sept. 14. The order of services was as follows: Introductory prayer, by Rev. Frederic A. Farley, D.D., of Brooklyn, N.Y.; selections from the Scriptures, by Rev. John W. Chadwick, of Brooklyn; sermon, by Rev. Samuel J. May, of Syracuse, N.Y.; ordaining prayer, by Rev. Octavius B. Frothingham, of New York; charge, by Rev. John Pierpont, of Washington, D.C.; right hand of fellowship, by Rev. Alfred P. Putnam, of Brooklyn; address to the people, by Rev. Samuel Osgood, D.D., of New York; benediction by the pastor.

Rev. CHARLES J. BOWEN was installed as pastor of the Mount Pleasant Society, Roxbury, Mass., on Sunday evening, Sept. 10. The order of services was as follows: Introductory prayer and reading from the Scriptures, by Rev. James W. Thompson, D.D., of Jamaica Plain; sermon, by Rev. Edward E. Hale, of Boston; installing prayer, by Rev. George Putnam, D.D., of Roxbury; right hand of fellowship, by Rev. James Freeman Clarke, D.D., of Boston; benediction, by the pastor.

KENOSHA, WISCONSIN. — A Unitarian Society has been organized in this town, and Rev. N. M. Mann has accepted an invitation to become its pastor.

RIPON, WIS. — The Liberal Society in this place, which was originally organized as a Universalist, has recently been re-organized as a Unitarian Society. The pastor, Rev. R. S. Sanborn, heartily sympathizes with this movement.

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — The corner stone of the New Unitarian church in this city was laid on Tuesday, Sept. 5. The services were conducted by Rev. George W. Hosmer, D.D., of Buffalo, N.Y., and Rev. Frederic W. Holland, pastor of the society.

Rev. D. M. REED, recently pastor of the Universalist Society in Dubuque, Iowa, has received a call from the Society in Rockford, Illinois.

Rev. SAMUEL B. STEWART has accepted a call from the Society in Lynn, Mass.

Rev. WILLIAM B. SMITH has accepted a call from the Society in Walpole, Mass.

Rev. STEPHEN G. BULFINCH has accepted an invitation to take charge of the Society at East Cambridge, Mass., for one year.

Rev. CHARLES NOYES has accepted a call from the Society in Northfield, Mass.

THE FIRST SOCIETY, BOSTON, Rev. Rufus Ellis, pastor, having voted to sell their real estate on Chauncy street, have purchased a lot of land at the corner of Marlborough and Berkeley Streets, where they will commence at once the erection of a new church.

Rev. CHARLES G. AMES, of Albany, N.Y., has accepted an invitation to go, as missionary of the American Unitarian Association, to the Pacific Coast.

Rev. SYLVAN S. HUNTING, the regiment of which he has been for several years chaplain, having been mustered out of service,—has accepted an appointment from the American Unitarian Association, to do missionary work in Michigan.

THE MAINE CONFERENCE OF UNITARIAN CHURCHES held its session in Portland, Sept. 19, 20, and 21, and was attended by nearly all the ministers of the State. Very interesting services and discussions were held; a permanent organization was effected; and, in connection with proposed missionary work, the following resolutions were adopted:—

“*Resolved*, 1. That all the Societies connected with this Association be requested to raise money for missionary purposes, to be expended in this State.

“2. That a Committee on Missions be appointed, to consist of three members, to be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Conference; that this Committee be authorized and instructed to expend the money raised according to their best judgment, and also to advise with the Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, in regard to the needs of the parishes in this State.

“3. That the different ministers be requested to have it understood that they will preach one-half of any Sunday in any place within easy reach that may need their services.

“4. That the delegates present pledge their Societies, as far as possible, as to the amount to be raised in each.”

The only drawback to the occasion was the lamentably thin attendance, at the meetings, on the part of the laity. It is hard to understand why such an opportunity for religious edification and quickening should have been so neglected.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

Aug. 24.	From Society in Portsmouth, N.H., additional	\$8.00
" 25.	" Rev. C. A. Bartol, D.D.	9.00
" 26.	" W. R. Cole, as an annual membership	1.00
" 31.	" Josiah G. Dearborn, Weare, N.H.	10.00
Sept. 2.	" Rev. T. T. Stone, as an annual membership	1.00
" 5.	" W. H. Brooks, as an annual membership	1.00
" 13.	" Society in Yonkers, N.Y., for Monthly Journals	17.90
" 15.	" Miss H. F. Webb	3.00